

THE  
SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT  
OF  
PRAYER,  
IN AN  
ADDRESS  
TO THE  
DISSENTERS in LANCASHIRE;

OCCASIONED

By a new LITURGY some Ministers, of that  
County, are composing for the Use of a  
Congregation at LIVERPOOL.

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By JOHN TAYLOR, D.D.  
Late Professor of Divinity and Morality at the Academy  
in WARRINGTON.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for J. WAUGH, at the Turk's Head in Lombard-  
Street; and W. FENNER, at the Angel and Bible in Pa-  
ter-Noster-Row, 1761.

SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT

P. R. A. Y. E. R.

A. D. R. E. S. S.

TO THE

DISSENTERS IN LANCASHIRE;



By a new Liturgical  
Committee, and composed for the Use of a  
Congregation at Liverpool.

By JOHN TAYLOR, D.D.  
Fellow of the Society of Jesus, and Ministry at the Academy  
in Warrington.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WATSON, at the Book-Hall in Lombard-  
Street; and W. VERNER, at the Angel and Bishop's-  
Head, in North Row, 1791.





## ADVERTISEMENT.

H A T the reader may have some  
 T idea of what gave rise to the fol-  
 lowing sheets, let it be observed,  
 that the worthy Author, who chose to fix  
 himself amongst the Dissenters, upon the  
 most honourable principle, thought it his  
 duty publickly to disavow the late extraor-  
 dinary proceedings of some Ministers in  
 LANCASHIRE.

What those proceedings are, may be  
 known from the following Letter, which ac-  
 companied a set of instructions to several  
 Ministers who were solicited to assist in  
 drawing up a Liturgy.

“ Reverend Gentlemen.

“ A Society of Protestants at LIVERPOOL,  
 “ who do not entirely approve of the present  
 “ method of conducting the publick devo-

A 2

“ tions

" tions in dissenting Congregations, and who  
 " cannot comply with the terms of Confor-  
 " mity to the established Church, are de-  
 " sirous to introduce a rational Liturgy into  
 " their form of worship. And as they would  
 " wish it as perfect as possible, they make  
 " free to solicit the assistance of some of  
 " their learned friends, in the compilation  
 " of it, who may approve of the design ;  
 " especially you, Gentlemen, to whom this  
 " Letter is addressed. They are very sensible  
 " of the difficulty of the task, and of the  
 " large portion of time and attention that it  
 " must necessarily take up ; but they are in-  
 " clined to hope, the great importance of  
 " the work, and the agreeable prospect that  
 " may be opened by the proposed reforma-  
 " tion, will induce you to favour their ex-  
 " pectations, and to join your abilities in  
 " this publick service."

LIVERPOOL,  
 Oct. 16, 1760,

These sheets were finished but a few days  
 before Dr. Taylor's decease\*, and had he  
 lived to have published them himself, they  
 would,

\* He died March the 5th, in the 67th year of his age,



would, no doubt, have appeared to greater advantage.

The reader is desired ever to remember, that the Author is defending *free Prayer*, only so far as it is rational; not any extravagant effusions, which bring a reproach upon religious worship.

No one could enter into this argument with a better grace than he, who has given such ample proof, that he never contended for any thing but the TRUTH, nor with any other view but to advance true RELIGION.



THE  
P R E F A C E.

READER,

**I** BEG you would be assured, that I have no design, in any part of the following Address, to censure the Church of England; my sole intention being to shew the Dissenters, what may be said in vindication of their mode of worship. My thoughts and views are wholly confined to ourselves, to the Dissenters. And as our Superiors have favoured us with a toleration of our worship, for which we are thankful, we hope we may, without giving offence, freely discuss among ourselves any point relating to that worship; while we live in peace and charity with all our protestant brethren of the Establishment, and are willing to make all candid allowances for those forms which are in use among them. Liberty to choose our own way of worship, implies a liberty to deliberate which way is best.

JOHN TAYLOR.

WARRINGTON,  
February 25, 1761.





THE  
 SCRIPTURE ACCOUNT  
 OF  
 PRAYER.

MY DEAR COUNTRYMEN,

IT is the peculiar honor and high distinction of the human nature, that we are the only creatures in the earth capable of converse with the most high God; which, as he is the most consummate perfection, must be the noblest use of our rational powers; and, as he is the only source of all happiness, must be of infinite importance to our well-being. We have not one faculty of body or mind, nor any one enjoyment of life, absolutely in our own hands; all our springs are in God,  
 and

and upon him we continually depend for life, and breath, and all things. This naturally directs our desires and expectations, under all present infirmities, deficiencies and difficulties, to the goodness and tender mercies of our almighty Father.

Prayer is a duty of natural religion ; but it is most clearly explained, strongly inculcated, and highly recommended in the holy Scriptures, by the most illustrious examples. In all the sacred history we do not find one eminent character of wisdom and goodness, which is not distinguished by a spirit of Prayer. Converse with God by supplication and thanksgiving shines most conspicuous in the characters of the most excellent persons. . . And the success of their Prayers, the rich and various blessings with which they were honored, are recorded on purpose to recommend this duty to our esteem, and those examples to our imitation. (a) *They sought the Lord, and he heard them, and delivered them from all their fears. They looked unto him and were lightened ; and their faces were not ashamed. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their Prayers.* (b) *He will fulfil the desire of them*

(a) Psal. xxxiv. 4, 5, 15. (b) Psal. cxlv. 19.



*them that fear him.* And in the New Testament this duty is more forcibly inculcated, in proportion to the much brighter displays of divine grace. There the Son of God, and captain of our salvation, not only commands the duty, but gives himself the most eminent example of it. And at once to demonstrate his unspeakable love, and to encourage our addresses to God, he has (c) *by his own blood, or most perfect righteousness, consecrated, or opened, a new and living way, to the throne of God in the holiest; whither he himself as our high priest, or agent in things pertaining to God, is entered, to appear in the presence of God for us, as our advocate and intercessor with him.* And it is on this account, he has directed us to ask in his name, *John xvi. 23. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* What greater encouragement can possibly be given? All the immense treasures of the divine goodness are opened and offered to our choice, and what we choose we are allowed to ask, and what we ask *in the name of Christ*, as the sincere imitators of his obedience and goodness, and in a full persuasion

(c) Heb. x. 19, 20. ix. 24.

on of the love of God in him, we are assured we shall receive. We should therefore, (d) *come boldly to the throne of grace, in assurance of obtaining mercy, and to find grace to help in the time of need.* This is the just ground and reason of the frequent, warm, and pressing exhortations to the duty of Prayer which occur in the epistles. (e) *Praying always with all Prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.* (f) *Be anxiously careful for nothing; but in every thing by Prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God. Labor fervently in Prayer, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Pray without ceasing. The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto Prayer.* These, and many other texts, prove, that the duty and spirit of Prayer is essential to the christian profession and character, and plainly suppose that every christian ought to be endowed with a gift or ability to discharge the duty.

But, my Friends, it is become a matter of some debate amongst you, in what method

(d) Heb. iv. 16.

(e) Ephes. vi. 18.

(f) Phil. iv. 6. Col. iv. 12. 1 Theff. v. 17. 1 Pet. iv. 7.



thod Prayer, especially publick Prayer, is most properly performed; whether by reading Prayers already composed, confining our thoughts to the sense of what we read; or by free and extempore Prayer, dictated by the sense, state and disposition of our own minds, and accommodated to any occasion or event of life.

In order to form a judgment upon this point, it should be previously observed.

I. That Prayer doth not properly consist in language, how curious and elegant soever, but in the real sense, and sincere desires of the mind. It is the heart, not the tongue that prays. It is the true and sincere devotion of the heart only, that can make our Prayers acceptable to God. For it is this disposition of spirit alone, that can be agreeable to him, who is the most pure and perfect Spirit. Without which, how elegant and moving soever the language of Prayer may be, it is all lifeless, and of no validity in the sight of God; and with which, plain, simple, and even illiterate speech, will meet with the most gracious reception. That manner of Prayer therefore, which is best adapted to ingage the pious attention and devotion of the mind, must, on all hands,

hands, be allowed to be the most eligible way of performing this duty.

II. That by *free* or *extempore* Prayer is not to be understood any crude unpremeditated effusion, in an entire dependance upon some supposed sudden extraordinary motion or suggestion of the Spirit of God. We are not encouraged, at least, in our age of the Church, to expect the assistance of the Spirit, but in conjunction with our own sincere endeavors: and *free* or *extempore* Prayer, in the just and rational sense of it, supposes a due degree of previous care to furnish the mind with proper materials and language, digested into good order and connection, that a person may be enabled regularly to adapt his thoughts and expressions, not only to general topics, or such things as are common to all cases and christians, but also to special providences, and the particular circumstances of those, who join with us in this act of divine worship. This I call the *gift* of Prayer, which is but an imperfect attainment, if it is not attended with the *spirit* of Prayer; meaning thereby a praying frame of heart, or that pious temper whereby a person is inclined and disposed to lift up his soul



soul to God, and to hold communion with him; not excluding such aids of the holy Spirit as are promised to the faithful discharge of all christian duties.

These things being stated and explained, it stands very clear in my thoughts, and appears to be very reasonably concluded by the body of Dissenters, that free Prayer, dictated by the sense, state, and disposition of a mind duely prepared for it, is the most eligible. You cannot, my Friends, be wholly ignorant of what has been urged, namely, that praying out of a book, hinders the free exercise of our own thoughts and desires, which naturally should dictate our praises and supplications; for the mind is the proper fountain of Prayer; and the affections, or pious sense of our minds, most certainly ought not to be stinted or cramped in Prayer; but, as we have freedom of access to the throne of grace, should be allowed to expand to their full dimensions, and to express themselves freely. We ought to serve God with our best; and nothing less than this is the best wherewith we can serve God.

Further; the use of a form prevents the improvement and growth of our mental abilities

bilities in our intercourse with the supreme Majesty of heaven and earth, which is the glory and highest excellence of our nature, and where we should be most solicitous, diligent and industrious, to exercise, enlarge and display them in the best manner we are able. He that only reads his Prayers, may never be able to do any thing more than read; may never be able to use his own thoughts, in conceiving a regular address to God his Maker, Father, and Ruler. Again, the constant repetition of the same words, (suppose, of the same Sermon) hath a tendency to make us less attentive to the sense, and so has less force to awaken, engage and impress the mind. They are read and regarded as things of course, but the Prayer which proceeds from the abundance of the heart and affections, is not only more lively in itself, but more affecting to others who hear it, and most naturally suited to awaken their attention, and to penetrate and move their hearts; whereas reading a Prayer is no certain sign that a Prayer proceeds from the inward sense, and conception of the reader's mind; and so, in that respect, must have comparatively less effect upon the



the audience. Lastly, perpetual confinement to a form may render our converse with God very imperfect; for it is not possible, that any forms of Prayer should be composed, that are perfectly suited to every state of our minds, and to all our occasions, in the things either of this life, or of that which is to come. But in the use of free Prayer, the careful performer can take in and expatiate upon whatever relates to particular cases and occurrences, so as to ingage, affect, and piously dispose the minds of those that join with him. On all these accounts, I reckon, that the spirit and gift of Prayer, are infinitely preferable to all the finest compositions in the world; and surely every one must be convinced in his conscience, that they are a most excellent qualification in a Minister of the Gospel.

But the case will stand in a stronger light, if we take a view of the means, and of the dispositions of mind by which both the gift and the spirit of Prayer are duely attained, and preserved in their proper state and vigor for constant habitual use. The ground and basis of this excellent endowment is laid in a deep and serious

rious sense of God and religion fixed in the mind and conscience. As Prayer consists in the holy exercise of faith, love, trust, and delight in God ; as it takes in the whole compass of religion, and is connected with all our concerns both spiritual and temporal, this plainly makes it necessary, that every person ought for himself to furnish his mind with such knowledge of God, and such pious sentiments and affections with regard to him, as dispose and determine the mind to trust in him at all times, and to look and seek unto him for every blessing. Every man should believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of all them, without exception, who diligently seek him. That he is the supreme Sovereign, the Lord and Governor of the whole universe ; the author of our being, and of all our enjoyments ; almighty in power, and can do all things for us ; unerring in wisdom, and can neither be ignorant of our circumstances, nor pass a wrong judgment upon them ; of perfect moral rectitude, a God of truth, and without iniquity ; always intimately present with us, wherever we are ; the conscious witness to all our thoughts and actions ;  
and



and a being perfect in goodness, must as a tender Father, be graciously inclined to make us happy in that way which his wisdom sees to be most expedient.

Thus we should be disposed continually to reverence and adore him; to retain a most grateful sense of his beneficence; to repose a steadfast trust in his all-sufficiency; to act righteously, as always under his eye; and to submit with patience and resignation to his disposals. Every man should be sensible of his own ignorance, weakness, insufficiency and guilt, that he may converse with God in true humility, with lively and strong desires, and with unfeigned penitence and contrition of heart. Every christian should have clear apprehensions of the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord, or of that most glorious, sublime, and rational scheme, which he hath formed to redeem us from the guilt and power of all iniquity, to refine and exalt our nature to a very high degree of purity, honor and felicity in the heavenly and eternal world; of all the noble privileges, and advantages, the exceeding great and precious promises, and all the things pertaining to life and godliness, which

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his

his divine power hath given us, as means and motives to animate our obedience, to raise our views and affections above the world, and the flesh, to give us fortitude in resisting temptation, and to make us steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, in all sincere disinterested goodness, beneficence, virtue and piety; the vanity and frailty of this life, the infinite importance of our present being, the near approaches of death, the coming of our Lord, the resurrection, the awful judgment, which will assign the righteous to everlasting life, and the wicked to eternal perdition.

These are the principles of religion, most just and important, which ought to be firmly established in the mind of every christian, to enable him to discharge all the duties of his profession, and particularly to qualify and dispose him to make his addresses in a worthy and acceptable manner to the throne of grace. These are the ground and foundation of the gift and spirit of Prayer.

And where this foundation is laid in the heart, such a heart will be stored with such an abundance of pious sentiments, as will naturally have a great effect upon the utterance



ance of the mouth, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. And for a supply of materials and the properest language, the Scriptures are abundantly sufficient. He who reads, and studieth the word of God, as every christian, and especially every Minister of the Gospel, ought to do, with constancy and care, will be thoroughly furnished unto this, as well as unto all other good works; and cannot fail of attaining both a divine skill and eloquence, and also a pious disposition for pouring out his heart before God on all occasions.

In order to preserve this gift, and this spirit, in a due state and temper for the daily discharge of the duty, in the exercise of free Prayer, it is necessary that a person should keep a strict guard upon his spirit, his heart and affections, and order his course of life in such a manner, as to avoid whatever would dissipate his thoughts, or unfit him for sacred converse with God. Carnal thoughts should be expelled, sensual, earthly affections should be mortified, or held in subjection; vain, light, frothy conversation, and whatever is inconsistent with an even,

composed, serious frame of mind, is to be avoided. In the practice of the duty, the mind should daily be exercised, not only at stated convenient hours, but at other seasons, in pious ejaculations, or breathings after God, as business, or the intervals of it, will permit. Thus we shall have God in our thoughts, and acknowledge him in all our ways. Thus Christ will dwell in our hearts, and we shall be filled with the fulness of God. Thus our minds will be well prepared for the influences of the holy Spirit, to give us life, warmth, and enlargement of thought, which will be attended with fluency of speech in Prayer.

Happy, beyond expression, is the man, who is thus qualified for communion with God. He worships him in spirit and truth, in the pure, spiritual, lively devotion of the soul, and stands in no need of other assistance. His heart is his Prayer-Book, vastly preferable to the most curious compositions; he hath attained to some perfection of beauty in this service; he feels the pleasure and power of it in his own breast, and shews it before men in all its loveliness and attractive force.

For



From this representation, which I am persuaded you will acknowledge to be just, you may see, my Countrymen, in the nature of the thing, the great advantage of free Prayer.

For by laying in materials, and furnishing our minds with proper sentiments for Prayer, in studying the holy Scriptures, we take the most effectual method to form and fix in our souls the best principles and dispositions for a holy life. This is an advantage which cannot arise from the reading of Prayers, especially those that are composed by other hands. And in using our *own* compositions †, the sense is, in some measure, transferred from the mind, to a writing, and the thoughts are not so much charged with our addresses to the throne of grace. And in the constant use of reading of the same composition, there is danger that the heart and thoughts will be still less and less employed in the service.

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† I would not be understood absolutely to preclude a Minister's reading his own precomposed Prayer, on some extraordinary occasions, or under a disconcerted state of mind. Upon these occasions I think they may be allowed to read such written precomposed Prayer.

In the use of free Prayer a person is obliged to set a constant watch over his spirit and behaviour, to keep himself always in a sober praying frame, as before observed. This is another advantage to the christian life in general, which every wise man, especially every Minister of the Gospel, would choose to enjoy, as being no more than what our common profession of religion requires of us, and yet of excellent use to enable us to answer its obligations, by setting our minds in a devout serious temper. But this is an advantage which doth not so much attend that method of Prayer, which requires not so strict a guard over a man's self, but may be performed under almost any dissipation of thought, or loose disposition of mind.

Reading of Prayers cannot give a Minister any character of esteem in a Dissenting Congregation, where it is considered as a very low manner of performing the office. If a Minister prays by heart or memory, which is the least that is done among Dissenters, he must at the same time shew some previous care and application to qualify himself for the duty, and some present thought and  
attention.



attention in the discharge of it, and so may appear to be deserving of some respect; which must arise to a high degree of esteem when the propriety of expression and sentiment, together with the life and fervor of utterance, plainly indicate that the address proceeds from the immediate conceptions and sense of a well prepared and truly pious and devout mind. Thus it is an admirable, excellent, and honorable gift. And the Apostle exhorts us *earnestly to covet the best gifts.* 1 Cor. xii. 31.

But, my Friends, the grand principle of your religious profession, is scripture evidence, and divine authority; a very just and incontestable principle. For every matter of Faith, Doctrine and Worship, you require divine authority, and search the Scriptures to find it. You meet with precedents for reading religious instructions, in religious Assemblies. *Ezra* the Priest, read in the book of the Law before a general Congregation of the children of Israel. *Neb. viii. 1—9.* The Lord ordered *Jeremiah* to write in the roll of a book, all the words of warning and admonition to Israel and Judah, which he had spoken unto him; and *Jeremiah* ordered Ba-

such to read that roll in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day; and so he did, *Jer.* xxxvi. 1—9. Our Lord on the Sabbath Day stood up in the Synagogue, and read a portion out of the book of the Prophet Isaiah, *Luke* iv. 16—20. St. Paul's epistles, full of divine instructions and exhortations, were read in christian Assemblies; and he gives a particular order and charge about the reading of them. *Coloss.* iv. 16. 1 *Thess.* v. 27. And if he who reads the Scriptures in public, meditates before-hand any remarks or enlargements upon their sense, and writes them down and reads them for the spiritual improvement of the Congregation, I apprehend he is justified in so doing, by scripture authority. But in all the sacred writings, we find not one word about praying by precomposed forms. Psalms, Hymns, and spiritual Songs, must necessarily be precomposed forms, because they are in poetic measures, fitted for being sung, and so they are used by Dissenters, for teaching and admonishing one another as they were by our Lord and his Apostles. So also we use the forms, in scripture prescribed, in the administration  
of



of Baptism, and the Lord's-Supper, and in dismissing our Assemblies. Here we have a divine warrant.

In the Prayer which our Lord taught his disciples, (*Mat. vi. 9, &c. Luke xi. 1, &c.*) he hath given us a summary of the petitions proper to be offered up unto God; or a pattern of matter, shewing in general what things we are to pray for, leaving particulars to the enlargement of our own thoughts, according to our particular occasions and circumstances. This appears to be the sense of most christians. No christians, I suppose, ever imagined the Lord's-Prayer was a full and complete form of Prayer or a Liturgy. For I never heard of any christians, in any age or part of the world, who thought the whole office of public Prayer was absolved, by only repeating the Lord's-Prayer, or who used the Lord's Prayer otherwise than only as a *part* either of free Prayer, or of a set form or Liturgy. Some indeed do not use it at all in public worship; while others contend that it is delivered to us as a form, which christian Churches ought to use as such. But these latter, my Friends, have no controversy with you upon this point, because

cause you do use it in this manner in your Assemblies.

With regard to the Lord's Prayer, some have been pleased to urge, "that our Lord's giving this form, was a precedent and warrant to his Church to give the like forms to her disciples or members; a thing which from her infancy she used to do." So saith Mr. *Joseph Mede* p. 2. of his works. Now if these assertions can be supported by just evidence, certainly we ought cheerfully to embrace such Liturgies as public authority is pleased to provide. For why should we subject ourselves to that labor and attention of mind, which are necessary to attain and support the gift and spirit of Prayer, as afore described, when we may be sufficiently supplied with Prayers at a much easier rate? But here the authority on which every part of our religion rests, is greatly deficient. We profess subjection to Christ alone, as our only Head, Governor and Teacher, in matters of Faith, Doctrine and Worship; and therefore as his disciples, we admit of no rules or forms, but what he hath prescribed.

And



And after the most diligent and impartial search, I am convinced, that no evidence can be produced, that our Lord Jesus Christ or his Apostles, ever did compile, prescribe, use or join in any Liturgy, or precomposed form of Prayer whatsoever, whether supposed to be jewish or christian. There is not only a total silence of such forms in the apostolic writings, but Prayer is there spoken of and recommended in such an extensive latitude, taking in all particular cases, circumstances and emergencies whatsoever, as is not consistent with the limitation which must necessarily attend precomposed forms. Had the Church of *Corinth* used a Liturgy, *St. Paul* would have had no occasion to have reprehended their manner of praying in an unknown tongue, (1 Cor. xiv. 13, &c.) because such Liturgy would doubtless have been composed in the language which all the Congregation understood. But he corrects the *persons* that prayed, not any *form* by which they prayed; and therefore considers the Prayers, offered in the Congregation, as conceived in the minds of the *persons* who prayed, and not as read out of any prescribed *form*.

*form.* And for remedying the disorder for the future, he could not have done better than recommend to them the use of a Liturgy, which yet he appears not to have had the least notion of.

It should also be considered, that if our Lord, or his Apostles had compiled a Liturgy, it could never have been lost; for being of divine authority, it would have been received and preserved in all the Churches of Christ, in the same manner as the other sacred writings. As sure therefore as no such Liturgy is now extant, \* so sure we are that no such Liturgy ever existed. And as our Lord and his inspired Apostles were, beyond all dispute, the best qualified for such a work, and could not be ignorant of any advantages that would attend it, in preference to free Prayer, (as before described) had it been in reality more acceptable to God, and more proper and effectual to promote the power and

\* There have been some Liturgies as well as some Gospels, published under the names of Apostles, but they are known to be gross forgeries, the work of later times, impiously designed to recommend the most corrupt doctrines and practices under the cover of apostolical authority.



and life of religion in christian Assemblies, doubtless they would have provided and recommended a Liturgy. But whereas they have not done this it seems to me a demonstration that they had no such conceptions of it. *St. Paul* (Acts xx. 20.) *kept back nothing that was profitable* to the Church of Ephesus; nor would he have kept back a form of devotion if that also had been profitable to them.

It is urged, "that christians in the apostolic age, being endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, did not want the assistance of a Prayer-Book." Our Lord and his Apostles when they speak of this duty, do always most plainly represent the gift and spirit of Prayer as essential to the christian profession and character in general; and evidently suppose that every christian was, or should have been, endowed with both of them. They are never in the New Testament mentioned as an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, but as a common ability belonging to all the members of the Church, to one as well as to another. Praying in an *unknown tongue* was a miraculous gift

gift of the Spirit, (1 Cor. xiv. 14.) but *praying*, simply considered, in the way of free Prayer was not so. Indeed how could free Prayer be esteemed an extraordinary miraculous gift, when it had existed and been exercised in the Church of God from the beginning of the world to that very time? \*

The miraculous powers of the holy Spirit took place in such cases as were new, and never seen or heard of before, exceeding all human abilities, in order to convince unbelievers that the Gospel was not of man, but of God; but the gift of Prayer was no new thing, and any unbeliever, upon the slightest inquiry or reflection, would soon discover it was but a common talent, which men of ordinary capacities and pious hearts might easily be possessed of, and which had long been exercised from the earliest times. It could not therefore give any distinction or commendation to the Gospel when first preached; and therefore was no miraculous extraordinary

\* The holy Patriarchs prayed to God, but for above two thousand years from the beginning of the world they could not pray by a Writing or Book, because Writing is not mentioned, as some learned men suppose, till the world had stood 2513 years. *Exod. xvii. 14.* And if it was invented before that time, it could not be long before.



extraordinary gift of the holy Ghost, but the ordinary exercise of the powers of a pious mind, of which therefore we are as capable now, as they were at that time. For have we not the same glorious displays of the grace of God to enliven and animate our souls, and the same divine instructions to replenish our minds with all spiritual knowledge and wisdom, were we but diligent in studying and improving them?

“ But they were directed to pray in the Spirit, *Ephes. vi. 18. Jude ver. 20.* and “ the Spirit helpeth their infirmities in Prayer, *Rom. viii. 26.*” And so they are directed to worship God in the Spirit, *Phil. iii. 3.* and to mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit, *Rom. viii. 13.* and the spirit is said to produce in them love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, *Gal. v. 22.* But in these latter instances, the spirit stands in relation to the common duties of all christians, in the present, as well as in the apostolic age, and therefore can relate only to the common influences of the Spirit, which we, as well as they, have reason to expect. The same may be concluded with reference to

to praying *in the Spirit*. Prayer is the common duty of all christians, in all ages, and all christians now a-days, are obliged to pray *in the Spirit*, as much as to mortify the deeds of the flesh *through the Spirit*; and therefore all are bound to pray for the assistances of the Spirit, and to dispose their hearts to receive them ; which if they do, they will certainly, in our days, receive those assistances, to enable them to discharge this, as well as other incumbent duties, in an acceptable manner. The Apostle (*Ephes. i. 16. 17.*) prayed, that God would give unto the Ephesians *the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*. And ought not we, every one of us, to pray so for ourselves ? Are not we obliged to know Christ as well as the *Ephesians* ?

By the way, I cannot but think that the christian religion hath suffered very much in these later times, from an opinion, that christians in the apostolic age, the age of miracles, were favored with extraordinary helps for a holy life, far beyond what we now enjoy ; and that we therefore are not obliged to the same degree of holiness, or  
the



the same attainments in the spiritual life : as if, after the decease of the Apostles, the christian religion had been altered into a quite different thing ; and because we cannot now work miracles, therefore we cannot live a sober, righteous, and godly life, in the several offices of religion, as christians then did. And it must be allowed, that if all the influences of the Spirit were absolutely confined to the apostolic age, then all the duties required to be performed through the Spirit, that is to say, all the duties belonging to the christian profession, must be confined to the apostolic age. But this is a great and dangerous mistake, which quite enervates the force of the Apostles example and exhortations. For though we have not, what we have no occasion for, the miraculous powers of the holy Ghost, yet we have the same Gospel displayed to us, as clearly in all its divine principles, and precepts, as it was to them ; and are assured of the same divine assistance in our conflicts, and in the sincere discharge of our duty, which they were favored with ; and, therefore, we must be obliged to aim at the same perfection, in every part of a

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sober,

sober, righteous, and godly life ; and particularly in that most eminent and fundamental part of it, the duty of Prayer.

If any should endeavour to prove that Liturgies were used in the ages immediately succeeding the apostolic, I must declare, that I have closely and impartially attended to the discussion of this point, and am so far from finding any footsteps of the use of precomposed forms of Prayer, in the first three hundred years, next ensuing the apostolic age, that, on the contrary, there are such descriptions given of the practice of christian Churches in their worship, as are inconsistent with, and exclusive of such forms. They prayed after the manner they had received from the Apostles and our Lord, according to the best of their abilities †, without any external assistance ; because they prayed from the inward sense and affections of their hearts ‡, with their eyes

† *Orn suavis*, the Bishop prayed *with the best of his abilities*, invention, judgement, expression, &c. *Just. Martyr Apolog. 2.* He that prays must bless God *kata suavitatem* according to his power. Origen. *De Oratione. §. 22.*

‡ “ We christians pray looking up to heaven, with our hands spread abroad, because we are innocent ; having  
“ our



eyes either shut, or devoutly looking up to God their Father in heaven \*, after the example of our Lord, *Job. xvii. 1.* This, for the reasons already given, is, in my apprehension, the most eligible way of praying. And in this way they continued to pray, in the purest ages of the Church, when christian doctrine and worship were least corrupted, and whilst the brightest luminaries, the most eminent Fathers, continued to shine in the christian world †.

## C 2

After

“our heads uncovered, because we are not ashamed; and  
“without a monitor, because we pray from the heart.” *Sine  
monitore, quia de pectore, oramus. Tertul. Apolog. Cap. 30.*

\* A true christian prays, *μύσας τὰς τῆς αἰσθησεως οφθαλμους, καὶ ἐγείρας τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς*—*closing the eyes of his senses, but erecting those of his mind.* *Origen. contra Cels. lib. 7.* And again in his book *De Orat. §. 9.*

† A particular examination of Antiquity upon this subject would swell this Piece too much; but there is a Treatise in Manuscript, done by the Reverend and Learned Mr. *Brekell* of *Liverpool*, in which all that has been advanced by the ablest hands, from the writings of the Fathers of the first three or four Centuries, in favour of Liturgies, is particularly considered, and clearly confuted; which is well deserving of regard, and will be published, if properly encouraged.

Lord *King* hath also considered this subject, though not so fully, in his *Inquiry into the Constitution, &c. of the primitive Church*, where he saith, (Part II. p. 34.) “Now as to these  
“prescribed forms, there is not the least mention of them,

“ in

After those great lights were extinct, and corruptions of all sorts begun to crowd into the Church, some, if not many Ministers, were so ignorant and unqualified, that they were not only not capable of praying from the sense and furniture of their own minds, but were not able to hammer out a Prayer for themselves, and borrowed Prayers from others, such as they happened to meet with good or bad. It was in this degenerate state of things, about four hundred years from the birth of Christ, that Ministers first begun to write, and, probably, to read their Prayers, in the public offices of religion, as we have not the least intimation of it in the writings of the ancients before this time.

No less a person than the famous *St. Augustin*, who flourished in the beginning of the fifth Century, is the man who gives us this account of the low state into which some of the Clergy of his time were sunk ; his

“ in any of the primitive writings, nor the least word or  
 “ syllable tending thereunto, that I can find ; which is a most  
 “ unaccountable silence, if ever such there were, but rather  
 “ some expressions intimating the contrary.”



his words are these — † *Si non sanctificatur aqua [baptismatis scil.] cum aliqua erroris verba per imperitiam precator effundit, multi non solum mali sed etiam boni fratres, in ipsa ecclesia non sanctificant aquam. Multorum enim preces emendantur quotidie si doctioribus fuerint recitatae, et multa in eis reperiuntur contra catholicam fidem. — Multi quippe irruunt in preces, non solum ab imperitis loquacibus, sed etiam ab hæreticis compositas; et per ignorantiae simplicitatem, non eas valentes discernere, utuntur eis, arbitantes quod bonæ sint.* “ If the water [of Baptism] is not  
 “ sanctified, when he, [the Priest or Mi-  
 “ nister] who prays over it, through want of  
 “ judgement utters some erroneous expres-  
 “ sions, many, not only evil-minded, but  
 “ also honest brethren in the very Church,  
 “ do not sanctify the *baptismal* water. For  
 “ the Prayers of many are corrected daily,  
 “ when they are recited before those that  
 “ are more learned, and many things are  
 “ found in them contrary to the catholic  
 “ faith. — Because many eagerly seize upon  
 “ the first Prayers they happen to meet  
 “ with,

“ with, though they are composed, not only  
 “ by injudicious praters, but even by he-  
 “ retics ; and, through an ignorant simpli-  
 “ city, not being able to discern what they  
 “ are, make use of them, supposing them  
 “ to be sound and good Prayers.”

Here St. *Augustin*, when he saith “ the  
 “ Prayers of many were corrected daily,  
 “ when recited before those that were  
 “ more learned, seems to refer to the  
 23d Canon of the third Council of *Car-*  
*thage* \*, which probably was held not long  
 before he wrote the above quotation. In  
 that Canon it is decreed, *Ut nemo precibus,*  
*[vel Patrem pro Filio, vel Filium pro Patre]*  
*nominet, et cum ad altare assistitur, semper*  
*ad Patrem dirigetur oratio. — Et quascun-*  
*que [quicumque] sibi preces aliquis [aliunde]*  
*describit, non eis utatur, nisi prius eas cum*  
*instructioribus fratribus contulerit.* “ That  
 “ no one, in his Prayers, should name either  
 “ the

\* Or rather to the 23d Canon of the famous Council of *Hippo*, which was held in 393, (*Dupin*) and in which this Canon, relating to the public Prayers of Ministers, was originally decreed ; and from thence, with 38 other Canons, was transcribed into the Canons of the third Council of *Carthage*, held in 397. (*Dupin*.) See *David Clarkson's* Discourse concerning Liturgies. p. 46, 47.



“ the Father instead of the Son, or the Son  
 “ instead of the Father. And when they  
 “ officiate at the altar, the Prayer shall al-  
 “ ways be directed to the Father. — And  
 “ what Prayers soever any shall write out,  
 “ [from others] for himself, he shall not  
 “ make use of them, ’till he has conferred  
 “ about them, with his brethren of better  
 “ learning and judgment.”

From these two authentic passages, compared together, the truth of which cannot be contested, we may conclude.

1. That the first writers of Prayers, that we meet with in the history of the Church, were *injudicious praters*, or *heretics*, as St. *Augustin* describes them.

2. That the Ministers, who first made use of written Prayers, were not the more learned, judicious, and experienced, but men so wretchedly ignorant and unskilful, that they would take up with any Prayers, any sorry stuff that came next to hand ; and in their Prayers would put the *Father* instead of the *Son*, and the *Son* instead of the *Father*.

3. That the Church must then, at least in some Congregations, be sunk into a very

poor low condition, when (as plainly is supposed) such Ministers, so scandalously ignorant, were still allowed to officiate, and to use their borrowed Prayers, in divine worship, provided those Prayers were but corrected by men of better judgment. Therefore, the use of set forms is not a sign of the most flourishing, but of a decaying state of religion, and of the insufficiency of Ministers. For,

4. Nothing but the insufficiency of those Ministers was the reason why they were allowed to use written Prayers in the public worship of God. They were not capable of conceiving a Prayer in their own minds, or of praying from the sense of their own hearts. From all this we may conclude,

5. That the practice of the Ministers of better learning, and judgment, was the reverse of this, namely, that they were not confined to forms of Prayer; neither did they write down their Prayers, but prayed from the sense and furniture of their own minds. For had they wrote down their Prayers, they would surely have supplied the ignorant brethren at once with their own compositions, instead of going through



through the daily drudgery of examining and correcting such miserable stuff as those ignorant brethren laid before them; or those ignorant brethren would have had so much sense as to have applied to the more judicious for their forms of Prayer, had they known that they had drawn up, and used such forms themselves.

6. That in St. *Augustin's* days, full four hundred years after Christ, there was no Liturgy in use, nor so much as thought of. For it is plain, that as those ignorant brethren had before been at liberty, so the Fathers in the Council still left them at liberty for the future, to use what Prayers they thought fit, under the forementioned restrictions. Which clearly shows, that no Ministers whatever, were then limited or directed, in the public offices of religion, by any Liturgy or prescribed form of Prayer, and consequently that no such form had then been admitted into the Church. Certainly there was then a very proper occasion for the Council to have decreed the compiling of a Liturgy, at least for the use of the ignorant brethren, had such a thing been thought

thought of, or thought to have been expedient; but the Council did not decree a Liturgy, therefore they either did not think of it, or did not think it a proper expedient for remedying even the great inconveniences arising from the incapacity of ignorant Ministers.

It is true, in process of time as sensuality, pride, ambition, luxury, sloth and ignorance, like a thick cloud, spread more and more over the minds and manners of Ministers, an inability to pray became still more general, till at last the scheme of a Liturgy was started, when indeed it was almost necessary to preserve the very form of public worship in the Church. This scheme could not take place all at once; it must and did gain ground by degrees, as people were inclined or compelled to comply with it; till at length, the Roman Missal or Mass-Book, by the usual methods of policy and power, was established and imposed, diffusing the superstitions of the Church of *Rome*, and her usurped authority over conscience through the body of the western empire; but not in the largest extent, till five or six hundred years



years from the time in which St. *Augustin* flourished. †

And now, my dear Countrymen, from what has been advanced concerning the nature of Prayer, and the practice of the earliest ages of christianity, you may be enabled to form some judgment upon the new scheme of reading Prayers in your Assemblies, and the use of a Liturgy which has been for a long time meditated, and now is putting in execution by some of your Ministers. \* And weighing every thing soberly and impartially, what do you think of the case? — The Apostles did not think they had any warrant to depart from the example of our Lord, nor did the primitive christians, for at least four hundred years, imagine

† See Arch-Bishop *Usher's* Discourse of the Religion anciently professed by the Irish and British, p. 31, 32, 33.

\* I do not here, nor in any following part of this Address, take in any considerable number of the *Lancashire* Ministers, much less of the whole body; whose characters I know to be worthy of esteem and honor. I mean only those who are immediately concerned in this affair. And though I cannot do justice to the Subject without arguing upon the case, and their conduct in it, yet I have no design to expose their Persons, but sincerely wish they may be concealed from the inquisitive Reader.

gine they had any reason or warrant to depart from the practice of the Apostles. Where then is the warrant for this innovation? I know of none that can be produced, but the insufficiency of Ministers. You may plainly see, that the insufficiency of Ministers, was the first occasion of reading Prayers in the Church. That indeed cannot be charged upon your innovators, nor are you or I disposed to rank them with St. Augustin's *injudicious praters*, or his *ignorant brethren*. However, I will venture to say, "that if their reading of Prayers is not the result of ignorance and insufficiency, ignorance and insufficiency may, and, probably, will be the result of their reading Prayers." For in this way, it is evident enough, they will indulge a relaxation of thought, and of that serious attention to the word of God, and to things spiritual and divine which is necessary to support an ability to pray. Through negligence, and for want of due exercise, their heads will lose the furniture, the materials and expressions, which they may already have acquired, and their hearts will grow indifferent, cold, and languid. Thus their parts will  
rust,



rust, their gifts and spirits will wither, and they will contract an habitual indisposition to communion with God, and reduce themselves to a prayerless condition. The consequence of which will be, a slothful aversion to study, a sinking in all ministerial endowments, and a general unfitness for every part of their important work ; and yet they will still serve for reading of Prayers, and other men's Sermons, even when they are incapable of making any of their own.

“ But the design is to improve the Dissenting mode of Worship.” The Dissenting mode of Worship by free Prayer, is formed upon the example of our Lord and his Apostles, explained and confirmed by the practice of the purest ages of christianity. And whoever attempts to improve it upon just principles, must fix it upon the very same foundation on which it now stands, and direct it by the very same rule, and so must leave it just as it is. He may indeed by his instructions or admonitions improve the abilities of those who perform the Worship of God after this mode or method ; but the mode itself no human wisdom can improve, because it is formed upon the most perfect

perfect plan of the example of Christ and his Apostles, which cannot possibly be improved or rendered more perfect. Could our blessed Lord or his Apostles countenance by their example, or recommend in any shape, a method of praying which they knew, (and they must have known it had been so) was of such an improper or imperfect kind, that it wanted no small correction?

The Principles and Worship of Dissenters are not formed upon such slight foundation, as the unlearned and thoughtless may imagine. They were thoroughly considered, and judiciously reduced to the standard of Scripture, and the writings of Antiquity, by a great number of men of learning and integrity; I mean the *Bartholomew* Divines, or the Ministers ejected in the year 1662; men prepared to lose all, and to suffer martyrdom itself; and who actually resigned their Livings, (which, with most of them, were, under God, all that they and their families had to subsist upon) rather than sin against God, and desert the cause of religious and civil Liberty; which together with serious religion, would, I am persuaded, have



have sunk to a very low ebb in the Nation; had it not been for the bold and noble stand these worthies made against imposition upon conscience, profaneness, and arbitrary power.

They had the best Education *England* could afford; \* most of them were excellent Scholars, judicious Divines, pious, faithful, and laborious Ministers; of great zeal for God and Religion, undaunted and courageous in their Master's work; keeping close to their people in the worst of times; diligent in their studies; solid, affectionate, powerful, lively, awakening Preachers; aiming at the advancement of real vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, which it cannot be denied flourished greatly wherever they could influence. Particularly, they were men of great devotion and eminent abilities in Prayer, uttered as God enabled them from the abundance of their hearts and affections; men of divine eloquence in pleading at the throne of Grace, raising and melting the affections of their hearers, and being happily instrumental in transfusing in-

\* See Dr. *Calamy's* Abridgment of Mr. *Baxter's* Life. Vol. II. and the Appendix.

to their souls the same spirit and heavenly gift. And this was the ground of all their other qualifications; they were excellent men, because excellent, instant, and fervent in Prayer.

Such were the Fathers, the first Formers of the Dissenting Interest. And you, here in *Lancashire*, had a large share of these burning and shining lights. Those who knew them not might despise them; but your Fore-Fathers, wiser and less prejudiced, esteemed them highly in love for their works sake. You were once happy in your *Newcombes*, your *Jollies*, your *Heywoods*; your *Finches*, your *Angiers*, your *Harrisons*, *Pendleburys*, *Cromptons*, *Mathers*, and many others, who left all to follow Christ; but Providence cared for them, and they had great comfort in their ministerial services. The presence and blessing of God appeared in their Assemblies, and attended their labors. How many were converted and built up in godliness and sobriety by their prayers, pains, doctrine, and conversation? How many days, on particular occasions, were set apart, and spent in warm addresses to the throne of  
Grace,



Grace, and how much to the comfort of those who joined in them?

But now, alas, we are pursuing measures, which have a manifest tendency to extinguish the light which they kindled, to damp the spirit which they enlivened, and to dissipate and dissolve the Societies which they raised and formed.

Conceive in your minds what the state of religion among the Dissenters will be, if reading Prayers be the common practice of all your Ministers, as doubtless it will, if you adopt the present scheme. Indeed, to induce you to admit a Liturgy, you may be made to believe, you shall therewith still enjoy, in some parts of the service, the benefit of free Prayer. But what security can you have for that? Are not these or any other Gentlemen at liberty to vary, and make alterations when, and as they please? You may depend upon it, if reading Prayers be once admitted, as indisposition and incapacity grow and spread, you will have nothing but reading, either in your public Assemblies, or on any other occasions. Young Ministers especially, (if they are not trained up in reading Prayers at your Academies,) will

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naturally

naturally incline to neglect the culture of this gift, when they can be accepted in an easier way, without the application and pains necessary for the attainment of it. Thus the gift and spirit of Prayer will perish from among you. While the faith and hope of the Gospel are lively and vigorous, the spirit of Prayer will be so too; when this grows languid, these also are languishing and withering away. And though you and your Ministers may be alive to politeness, amusement, mirth, gaiety and sensual pleasures, you will be dead to the life, power, and pleasure of Religion. Such a prospect can be regarded, with indifference, only by those who are already very cold and indifferent; to those who have any degree of spiritual life and sense, it must appear very shocking. And thus also your interest, of considerable importance to the cause of Religion and liberty, will be ruined. It can be supported only by the same spirit of devotion, by which it was at first raised. People will find a difference between a Prayer on paper, and a Prayer in the heart; and when your Ministers have sunk their characters, but few, if any,



any, will care for attending upon their ministry, or contributing to their subsistence.

It may be urged, "that a set form is the best mean to secure propriety of sentiment and language; and to prevent crude conceptions, and coarse, low, unmeaning expressions, by which free Prayer may be exposed to contempt and ridicule."

Not language, but the sense of the heart, is of the essence of Prayer. God who is a pure and perfect mind, doth not so much regard what words we use, as with what dispositions of mind. Those expressions therefore are most proper in Prayer, not that are adorned and polished by the rules of human eloquence, but that are adapted to convey the sense and affections of pious praying souls; and every wise man will prefer that language, how plain and simple soever; which penetrates and excites his heart, before all the elegance of smooth, flowing, and harmonious periods, which please the false taste of curious delicate ears; and are apt to lead the thoughts to attend more to the diction than to the duty, to the words more than to the sense. For which reason, the language and stile of Prayer is the more im-

proper, the more it appears to have been laboured; and your new Prayer-Book may prove a gilded Idol, which will be admired and adored by those that use it, more than the God they profess to worship.

Natural plainness and simplicity in divine Worship is most suitable to the Gospel; which simplicity if we destroy by adding to it the paint and patches of bold and wanton fancies, we destroy its purity, power, and truest beauty. That way of worship is most pleasing to God, not that we imagine, but which he chooses. And, my Countrymen, may you not more stedfastly believe, that your own scripture-way is more acceptable? And is it not much safer for you to adhere to what you know Revelation will vindicate? And surely you may bear with some improper expressions, or even incongruities of speech, (if it should so happen,) if the Prayer be affectionate, and hath such Oratory as the great God is pleased to listen to, the Oratory of a warm and sincere heart. Some in St. *Augustin's* days ridiculed the coarse and uncouth language, which some of the Bishops and Ministers

then



then used in Prayer. " But, saith he, † Let  
 " them know, there is no voice besides the  
 " affection of the soul, that reaches the ear  
 " of God; and they will not jeer, if per-  
 " chance they observe that some of the Bi-  
 " shops and Ministers of the Church do call  
 " upon God with barbarisms or solecisms,"  
 that is, with odd and improper ways of  
 speaking. || " For," according to *Chrysof-*  
*tom*, " God seeketh not the eloquence of the  
 " tongue, nor the elegant composition of  
 " words, but the flower and vigor of the  
 " soul." †

But, my Friends, the foregoing objection  
 is not of your making, whose ears, I dare  
 say, have not been disgusted by any crude  
 conceptions, or low coarse language, which  
 your Ministers have used in Prayer. Your

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Ministers,

† Noverint etiam non esse vocem ad aures Dei, nisi ani-  
 mi affectum; ita enim non irridebunt, si aliquos antistites et  
 ministros ecclesiae forte animadverterint vel cum barbarismis,  
 vel solecismis Deum invocare. *August. De catech. rudibus,*  
*cap. 9. tom. IV.*

|| This is another Proof, that set forms of Prayer were not  
 in use in *St. Augustin's* time, full four hundred Years after  
 Christ.

† Οὐ γὰρ γλῶττης ζητεῖ καλλῶς οὐδὲ ρημάτων συνθέ-  
 κην, ἀλλὰ ψυχῆς ὥραν. *Chrysostom. in Psal. 8.*

Ministers, to whom you give a liberal education, are trained up to perform the solemn duty, in a proper and agreeable manner. Why then do some of them labor to disparage and discard free Prayer? In this way Ministers are obliged to greater care, thought, and circumspection; and it lies as a weighty charge upon their consciences, to use all proper means to qualify themselves for doing honor to a manner of worship, recommended by the Son of God. And no wise man would wish to be exempted from this, as it is evidently a mean of keeping the sense and power of Religion alive in his heart. But yet, I suspect, it is here the difficulty lies. "We care not for having our minds under such constraints, always watching over our spirits, cultivating and guarding a serious frame and praying affections." What's to be done? Why surely we ought to rectify our hearts. No—"We desire and insist that you give up free Prayer, as an improper way of worship, and allow us to read our Prayers out of a Paper or Book." But how can you give up free Prayer, which stands upon the strongest reasons, and the highest authority? Your Ministers may, and should reform; but



but the mode cannot be mended, therefore should not be discarded. Should you comply with this, are you sure we shall stop here? May we not in time be too indolent to study our own Sermons? I fear we should. Your Ministers, for above a hundred years, have prayed in this manner with the approbation, and to the advantage of their hearers, and so may your present and succeeding Ministers, if they give themselves to Prayer, and study to be good Ministers, nourished up in the words of Faith and sound Doctrine. But if any are not capable of ministerial qualifications, or refuse to acquire them, why do they engage in the ministry? Or what have they to do among you? Let them turn some other way.

There is a Piece, and the only one written upon this occasion, in favor of this new scheme, by one, though nameless, who must be a principal leader in it, intitled *A Letter to a Dissenting Minister, representing the expediency of stated forms of Prayer for public Worship.* By a Dissenting MINISTER.\*

D 4

First

\* The Editor of these sheets has been informed, that this "Letter to a Dissenting Minister, &c." is ascribed to the Reverend Mr. SEDDON of WARRINGTON.

First published in *London* 1753. and again in the *Country* in 1758. This Letter has been answered, and sufficiently confuted by the learned Mr. BREKELL of LIVERPOOL, \* and by another hand. As it has been twice published, without any reply to either of these answers, we are left to conclude, that the principles upon which the Author and his Friends have acted, are contained in this Letter, and in their judgment do stand good, and still remain in their full undiminished force. And without doubt, my Friends, they would be pleased if you also were of the same persuasion. But whether this be the case, you may judge if you please to attend to the few following reflections upon this Letter.

He sets out thus — “ The circumstance I  
 “ confess, which has the greatest weight  
 “ with me, and bears hardest upon our me-  
 “ thod,” (meaning the Dissenters method of  
 Prayer,) “ is the tendency it has in general  
 “ to destroy the very nature of Prayer itself,  
 “ considered as a direct solemn address to,  
 “ and immediate intercourse with the Al-  
 “ mighty.”

\* Under the title of “ Remarks upon a Letter to a Dis-  
 “ senting Minister, &c.” published in the year 1758.



"mighty." (p. 4.) That is to say, the method of praying among the Dissenters, considered *in general*, by whomsoever, or in what manner soever, it is performed, has a tendency to destroy the very nature of it, or to render it no Prayer, no address to God, no act of converse, or communion with the Almighty.

This is a most rash and extravagant assertion. Our Lord prayed with his disciples, the only Congregation he then had upon earth, *Luke ix. 18, 28. — xi. 1. John xvii. 1, &c.* in which last place, we have his Prayer at large, through the whole Chapter. Now, no man of understanding can suppose, that our Lord read his Prayers out of a Paper, or a Book ; or that he, and his Apostles after him, prayed otherwise than in the free and extempore way, the same, in its general nature and use, as free Prayer is now used. This is allowed by the warmest and most learned advocates for Liturgies ; and, I am persuaded, this Writer himself is of the same opinion. Therefore, by common consent, it must be judged, that the severe charge, which he has advanced against the method of praying among  
the

the Dissenters, and which is the foundation of his whole scheme, infers the highest dishonour to our Lord, and his Apostles. What, could our Lord, or could his Apostles, pray in a method implying the most solemn mockery towards God, and the grossest hypocrisy towards men? In a way, which, if this Author knows it, they must certainly have known it, to have a *tendency to destroy the very nature of Prayer itself*, or to frustrate the end and design of that solemn duty? God forbid, that any one should adopt a principle of such impious tendency! Or that any honest christian should be deluded by a sentiment so dishonorable to the blessed Redeemer of the world! And yet this is the principle, for any thing they have told us to the contrary, upon which the new scheme is established.

By the way, this hints an admonition to such as dislike the mode of praying among the Dissenters. They may except against the manner in which it may be improperly performed by particular persons, but against the mode itself, *in general*, they cannot except, without excepting against the practice



rice of our blessed Lord, and of his Apostles, who certainly prayed in this manner.

As this Writer, by just consequence, affirms, "that without set forms, or Liturgies, Prayer hath a tendency to destroy itself, or to be no Prayer at all," he surely raises their utility a great deal too high. For thus he represents them as essentially necessary to support the very being of Prayer in christian Assemblies. But if this be true, our Lord and his inspired Apostles must have known it to be true. And then, as they were, beyond dispute, the best qualified, so doubtless they would have taken care to have supplied us abundantly, and free from all error too, with that which was necessary to preserve the very being of Prayer in christian Congregations, I mean a Liturgy; and not have left it to be done by no body knows who, in remote ages, and at a time when they foresaw the christian religion would be greatly corrupted. But neither our Lord, nor his Apostles, have left us such a Liturgy, as this Author is contending for; therefore he has carried his notion of a Liturgy far beyond any opinion our Lord, or

the Dissenters, and which is the foundation of his whole scheme, infers the highest dishonour to our Lord, and his Apostles. What, could our Lord, or could his Apostles, pray in a method implying the most solemn mockery towards God, and the grossest hypocrisy towards men? In a way, which, if this Author knows it, they must certainly have known it, to have a *tendency to destroy the very nature of Prayer itself*, or to frustrate the end and design of that solemn duty? God forbid, that any one should adopt a principle of such impious tendency! Or that any honest christian should be deluded by a sentiment so dishonorable to the blessed Redeemer of the world! And yet this is the principle, for any thing they have told us to the contrary, upon which the new scheme is established.

By the way, this hints an admonition to such as dislike the mode of praying among the Dissenters. They may except against the manner in which it may be improperly performed by particular persons, but against the mode itself, *in general*, they cannot except, without excepting against the practice



tice of our blessed Lord, and of his Apostles, who certainly prayed in this manner.

As this Writer, by just consequence, affirms, "that without set forme, or Liturgies, Prayer hath a tendency to destroy itself, or to be no Prayer at all," he surely raises their utility a great deal too high. For thus he represents them as essentially necessary to support the very being of Prayer in christian Assemblies. But if this be true, our Lord and his inspired Apostles must have known it to be true. And then, as they were, beyond dispute, the best qualified, so doubtless they would have taken care to have supplied us abundantly, and free from all error too, with that which was necessary to preserve the very being of Prayer in christian Congregations, I mean a Liturgy; and not have left it to be done by no body knows who, in remote ages, and at a time when they foresaw the christian religion would be greatly corrupted. But neither our Lord, nor his Apostles, have left us such a Liturgy, as this Author is contending for; therefore he has carried his notion of a Liturgy far beyond any opinion our Lord, or

or his Apostles could have of it, that is to say, far beyond the truth.

However, to remedy the inconveniences attending the dissenting method, he informs us, that he *collected* and put together *forms of Prayer for his own use, with a design to introduce them into his own Congregation.* (p. 9, 10, 13.) But upon further consideration, he found there was sufficient occasion to believe, that the generality of the Congregation would be greatly scandalized at the attempt, and his circumstances were such as obliged him in prudence to decline the scheme; and so, consulting with worldly prudence, he went on still praying, as usual, in the public Assembly in a way, which he was conscious *had a tendency to destroy the very nature of Prayer itself.* I wish I could reconcile this conduct with integrity. How could he in honor persist in using a mean of divine appointment for the eternal salvation of himself, and of his Congregation in a manner, which he was persuaded had a tendency to render it ineffectual, or rather to annihilate it? Our glorious first Reformers in *England* chose the bitterest sufferings, and most cruel death; and the Bar-

*tholomew*



*tholomew* Divines, the Fathers of the Dissenting Cause, resigned all their Livings, and cast themselves entirely upon Providence, rather than violate conscience, or sin against God: *Let my soul for ever be with the souls of these men.*

But here, my Countrymen, I may appeal to your own experience; you have, many of you, for a long course of years, attended upon the worship of God in dissenting Assemblies, and do you find, upon reflection, that you have been praying all this while in a method, "which has a tendency to destroy the very nature of Prayer itself;" and that the longer you have joined in it, the more your hearts have been estranged from God; or that you have less prayed to God in faith and hope, the longer you have sincerely endeavoured to pray to him in this way? Have your Prayers, merely by the use of this method, and by nothing else, at length been rendered a solemn mockery of God, and wholly insignificant to yourselves? On the contrary, are you not conscious, that the more you have attended to this way of praying, the more you have been edified and comforted; the more you  
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have improved in the love of God, and every christian disposition; the more humble, the more serious, and the more heavenly minded you have been? Who then can have the assurance to affirm, that you have been so long praying in a method, which has a tendency to destroy the very nature of Prayer itself? Or you may try the truth of the Case another way. You have neighbours all around, who worship God in the method this person is contending for. Doth it appear, that they have a much higher relish of spiritual things, or a much deeper sense of God and religion than the generality of your dissenting Acquaintance? And what more can be said? You have had among you men of the most excellent ministerial abilities, and of the most undoubted integrity, eminent in the gift and spirit of Prayer, who by the favor of their devotions, have raised the hearts of thousands that joined them, to the throne of grace; and can you believe that such worthy Ministers, and happy instruments of promoting the power of religion in the hearts of so many, either could or should pray in a manner which

had



had a tendency to frustrate all the important ends and purposes of it? If not, can you think those deserving of any regard who can insinuate such a vile reflection? Or that scheme worthy of encouragement, which is only supported by a sentiment so false and groundless?

It is also intimated, that you *are too apt to look upon Prayer as the Minister's business, and not to consider it so much as you should do, as a duty in which you yourselves are equally concerned.* (p. 4.) But is this true? Here again you are to answer for yourselves. Are you indeed so ignorant or so careless, that you do not know or do not consider that the Minister is the mouth of the whole Congregation, and that all present should join him in Prayer, and lift up their hearts to God as well as he? I cannot entertain an opinion of you so mean and disparaging.

But he fancies, "that a Dissenting Liturgy would turn much to the advantage both of the Church of England and of the Dissenters." As how? Why, *many serious and sensible people, who think there are very just exceptions against many parts of their public service, and find so little disposition in their*

Governors

Governors to make any alterations, however reasonable, might very gladly come over to us if they could once see us making use of a Liturgy, in which they could join with greater satisfaction. (p. 12.) But can we be so vain as to imagine that any Liturgy we can compile will engage the attention and esteem of Church-men? At best, it will be but a *Presbyterian Liturgy*, and that alone with the generality will sink it into contempt.

A *Presbyterian Liturgy*, drawn up by a few obscure inferior hands, the implement of a Conventicle, without the sanction of public authority, can have no great effect upon our Brethren of the Church of England. But instead of softening, (p. 12.) will certainly heighten old prejudices, when we appear to be such stiff, obstinate, and way-ward mortals, that even when we are convinced of the utility of Liturgies, yet we refuse to accept theirs. Which, by the way, may possibly, in some future changed state of public affairs, give the enemies of religious liberty a handle, and specious pretext, to impose upon us their own forms, by severe methods of persecution. This deserves to be considered.

But



But if this Letter Writer wants to make Profelytes, it is plain, in the case of the Methodists, that free Prayer is the more successful way. If their Preachers (though professed Churchmen) had read their Prayers, they would have made no great impressions; but in the use of free Prayer they have drawn considerable numbers out of the Church, and settled them in Congregations all over the land. For one Churchman this Author will bring over to the Dissenters by his Liturgy, the Methodists, I will venture to say, have brought over a hundred, if not a thousand, in the use of free Prayer.

Again; he imagines *a common Prayer-Book* among us, *might help forward by degrees a reform in the service of the National Church.* (p. 13.) Indeed! Can we be so presumptuous as to flatter ourselves, that the lustre of our example, or the excellency of any Liturgy we can compile, will have force enough to influence the judgment, or excite the emulation of the Governors of the Church, to whom the matter belongs, and induce them to reform their Service-Book, when of late they have not thought fit to encourage the Addressees of some of the best

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and wisest among their own Clergy? Some wish for a Reform, but do they wish, or would they like, that we should be the Reformers? It must be a very extraordinary juncture, and such as, in the common course of things, can never with any probability be expected, when the Church will condescend to be directed or influenced by the Dissenters. On the contrary, I am confident that if any thing in a reformed Liturgy should be copied from, or framed agreeably to the practice of Dissenters, it would raise in the Nation a general dissatisfaction and prejudice against it. No. I cannot see in any shape or view how we can be assisting in this case. In truth they do not want our assistance, if they were inclined to accept it. There are, and we may hope will always be, men in the Church of *England* of good sense, learning and piety, sufficient for this work, whenever a favorable time for it occurs. Nor should we busy ourselves in a case of this nature, in which we are not immediately concerned. It is enough for us that we are favored with a Toleration; for which we owe thanks to God, and to the Government too, how much



much soever it may be our natural right. And in the use of this privilege, it becomes us peaceably and modestly to worship God sincerely in our own approved mode, leaving our Superiors to follow their own judgment, and take their own time and measures in reforming the established worship; which as we enjoy liberty for our own, affects not us, but only with respect to some temporal emoluments which we may well spare, and in the hope of eternal life, cheerfully resign\*.

Doth this Writer and his Friends expect that any common Prayer-Book they have drawn or can draw up, will meet with ready and universal acceptance among the Dissenters, even of their own Denomination? So his way of arguing seems to imply. But the Dissenters are a free people, strongly tenacious of both their civil, and especially of their religious liberties. In matters of Religion, it is their avowed principle, which they have long and bravely maintained, to submit to no authority but what is divine; and after several hard struggles, they at last

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prevailed

\* For a fuller confutation of this Author, see Mr. BRACKELL's Remarks before mentioned.

prevailed with the Government to grant them liberty to worship God agreeably to that most just principle. And can these Reformers be so ridiculously absurd as to imagine the Dissenters will admit a Liturgy composed and offered by a few inconsiderable men? So various are the religious sentiments of men, or such is the nature of a Liturgy, that no Liturgy can be established, as a common form of worship in a Nation, without the authority and sanction of the supreme governing Powers in that Nation. Shall a few Ministers pretend to make a Liturgy of their own compiling current through any body of men now in *England*, where they have neither authority to enforce, nor preferments to recommend it? Such a Liturgy must be a naked defenceless thing, exposed to all manner of censure, ridicule, and contempt.

“ But, it may be hoped, it will make its way to esteem and regard by its own intrinsic excellence and perfection.” Small hopes of that. No human wisdom, I presume, can frame any thing of this kind, which will suit every judgment and every conscience. Something in the opinion of some



some persons, will always be offensive and erroneous, something deficient, something redundant; and where every body is free and inclined to judge, cavilling, objecting, finding fault, and condemning will be very easy, if not very pleasing work. Private judgment and conscience are so nearly connected with a Liturgy, that the best that can be formed by the skill of man, could not be able to support itself, unless firmly upheld by the highest authority that can be engaged.

“Perhaps, by proper management it may  
 “be insinuated by degrees into dissenting  
 “Congregations.” This doubtless will be attempted by all the arts of address and persuasion; and of this, my Countrymen, you ought to be well aware. For consider what will be the consequence. The same spirit which has taken it into one Assembly, will be for thrusting it into others. Some may approve, others disapprove, some may accept, others reject, for it cannot be supposed that all in any Congregation will at once, without reluctance, give up their usual and approved method of worship. \* Hence variance,

\* It cost *Rome* the patience and policy of some hundreds of years before its Liturgy could be universally imposed or established.

niance, discord, animosity will be brought into christian Societies and Families, and war raised among those who are now at peace. Christian Congregations will be divided, shattered, and broken; harmony and love destroyed. This you know is contrary to the spirit, and doctrine of Christianity; and must infer much sin and guilt, in which the first authors will be most deeply involved,

The Scotch people chose to pray without stated forms; but King Charles I. and Archbishop *Laud*\* were determined to make them read their Prayers out of a Liturgy, or common Prayer-Book prepared for them. The Scots refused. Twice the King led an army into *Scotland* to force their compliance, but to no effect. Hence, as from the original source, I apprehend, proceeded all the following battles and bloodshed, all the violence, ravages, and disorders in the Civil War.

Religious quarrels breed the most ill blood, and of the worst kind. The Dissenters choose their present way of worship, and upon very good grounds. They choose

\* See CLARENDON'S History.



choose it, and the Government is so good and wise as to allow it. They are at peace among themselves, and well satisfied with their own way of worship. And it is, in the nature of things, impossible that they should be brought into any other, without breaking peace; and introducing discord, and a world of evils among them. And who, that wisely reflects, would choose to have a hand in, or any ways to encourage a scheme, which is manifestly of such pernicious tendency? Therefore, my Friends, carefully and resolutely guard your peace and comfort, against all insinuations that would destroy them. They that would break in upon your tranquility, thanks be to God, have no power over you, but what you yourselves give them. Be steadfast, and you are in no danger.

There is another thing, my Friends, you ought to be apprized of, and it is this. That a Liturgy, both with respect to those that compile, and to those that use it, implies a confession of Faith, and this, in regard both to what is, and to what is not therein expressed. People pray as they believe. The points of faith expressly mentioned, or plain-

ly implied, they are supposed to believe. Such as are omitted, and by others received, they are judged to disbelieve, and reject. Religious knowledge is in a progressive state, and has been so, at least, ever since the Reformation. It is not therefore possible, that the wisest men, in our days, should form a Liturgy absolutely and immutably perfect, which shall never want any amendments or alterations; because, as in process of time new evidence arises, religious sentiments ought to vary. What is found to be true, we are bound to embrace, and to discard what is discovered to be false. This will prove a great inconvenience to your new Liturgy, as people may be led to go on praying by it, when their better informed understandings and consciences may tell them, that it expresses a wrong faith, or corrupt doctrine, or is silent upon some article, which now appears to be true, and well grounded, and therefore ought to be taken into your devotions.

What is to be done in this case? I had it from a principal hand in the affair, "That  
 "it was proposed to have a meeting of Mini-  
 "sters every Seventh Year, to review and ad-  
 "just



“just the orthodoxy of the new Liturgy,  
 “and to reform any faults therein, that  
 “might from time to time appear.” This  
 would do, once for all, in the hands of  
 persons inspired and infallible; but, as things  
 now are, it will be directly to set up an eccle-  
 siastical jurisdiction among you, over under-  
 standing and conscience, lodged in the hands  
 of fallible men. Therefore how well so-  
 ever this may suit the ambition of innovators,  
 you cannot but be sensible it will subject you,  
 should you consent to it, to an intolerable  
 yoke of bondage. A Septennial Synod of fal-  
 lible Ministers will receive from you, or as-  
 sume to themselves, authority to sit as judges,  
 to determine and settle for you matters of  
 faith, doctrine, and worship. How do you  
 relish this? Can you digest it? It is the na-  
 tural result of this wild scheme. You must  
 either incur the danger of using a corrupt  
 Liturgy, or consent to establish some autho-  
 rity to revise and correct it, as the case may  
 require. This is directly contrary to your  
 own principles, and to that freedom from hu-  
 man impositions which, as christians, you  
 are bound in conscience to disdain and reject;  
 and may, in time, bring you into servitude

to as haughty and extravagant a tyranny as  
 ever appeared in the christian Church. Not  
 to insist, that it is impossible you should  
 foresee how this revision of your Liturgy  
 will be performed; whether for the bet-  
 ter, or for the worse; whether peaceably,  
 or, (as is too common in such cases) conten-  
 tiously and tumultuously; whether fairly  
 and impartially, or, (which is more prob-  
 able) by the arts and prevalence of a party.

The case therefore, my dear Countrymen,  
 in every view, is very plain; you ought per-  
 emptorily and vigorously to withstand this  
 usurpation, and to crush it in its infancy.  
 If Dissenters submit to such a scheme, their  
 liberty will be endangered. And can you at  
 length sacrifice religious liberty, to the fan-  
 cies of a few weak injudicious persons? Or  
 pay that submission to them, which you des-  
 ny to the Government? For shame! Surely,  
 you cannot, you will not. If your cause is  
 sunk never so low, as for wealth and numbers,  
 I beg you would inviolably maintain the ho-  
 nor of it. You read in your Assemblies the  
 pure word of God, your Ministers, to the  
 best of their abilities, instruct and pray accord-  
 ing to that rule. And according to that rule  
 you



you sincerely endeavour to form your religious sentiments, leaving your fellow-christians perfectly free to do the same, and living with them in peace, and in all offices of love and goodness, though they may happen, in some things, to differ from you in judgment. Thus you improve in knowledge and piety, faith and charity. And what would you have more? You pray, as from the beginning of the world; for about two thousand five hundred years, the Patriarchs prayed, those ancient favorites of heaven, such as, *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*; you pray, as our blessed Lord prayed; you pray, as the holy servants of God, the Prophets and Apostles, and the noble company of Martyrs prayed. I may add, you pray, as Angels would pray, should they come down and officiate in your Assemblies.

It is impossible you should, in this imperfect state, rise to a higher degree of perfection. Therefore keep as you are, and do not suffer yourselves to be unhinged and distracted by any new-fangled devices; which, however they may shine in the weak imaginations of the inventors, cannot put you into a better way, but will certainly mislead you  
into

into a much worse. And though you may be censured as a *stiff, obstinate, and wayward* people, for dissenting from the Establishment, I hope you will not incur that character by dissenting from these innovators. Therefore it is your wisdom to adhere steadily to your own approved way, and to repel vigorously any attempts to disparage or suppress it.

And can you tell me, my Friends, where these things will end? If you come into one scheme, are you sure you shall not be drawn into another? In my own thoughts, I put it down for certain that you will. If once you desert your scripture-principles, and give into the inventions of busy heads, you may be left to wander and lose yourselves in the devious paths of the vainest imaginations. Some things have already been moved, and others will follow, as ignorance, vanity, assurance, a lust of power, love of novelty, an aversion to study and labor, a disregard to scripture-principles, a contempt of Gospel-simplicity, an undervaluance of the Dissenting-interest, and such like qualities (which will flourish greatly under the favor of your indulgence) shall dictate.

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Your Ordinations have already been boldly attacked, though nothing is done, or required in them, but what is very agreeable to the nature of the solemnity, *viz.* That the Candidate give some specimen of his learning and abilities, that he declare his belief in, and assent to, the Scriptures, as a divine Revelation, his profession of his sincerity in undertaking the work, and his resolution to be faithful in discharging it ; and then he is set apart to it, by Prayer, and laying on of hands—But this may imply a more strict and serious regard to the several parts of the ministerial office, than some Ministers choose to submit to, who love to breathe in a free air, and may not care to be tied up to that holy temper and conduct, that vigilance and self-denial, that integrity and ardent desire to save souls, which the Apostles require in the character of a Minister.

Baptism, by a strange liberty, has also been changed into the *dedication* of children, in one instance, at least, where an Infant was only dedicated to God, but not baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Spirit. This practice has a direct tendency, to dissolve, in the thoughts of christians, the  
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essential connection between Baptism and the Covenant of Grace, of which Covenant, Baptism is the memorial, sign, token or seal, most properly confirming and assuring to the Infant baptized, and the rest of the Family, all the unspeakably great blessings of the Gospel, as they are freely given to us of God in Christ: and so all the comfort and encouragement to a pious life, which this Ordinance in succeeding generations is intended to inspire, will be lost to you and yours, and sunk into utter oblivion. Your children will be dedicated to God, but you shall not see the least glimpse of the glory of divine grace, which God has appointed to shine upon them in this very rational and comfortable Institution.

The Covenant, or free grant of blessings in Christ, the ground of the whole christian faith, life and hopes, which seems at present to be little understood or regarded, will perish out of your thoughts, and you will sink nearer to the state of meer Deism. You will soon come to this, that *good Morality is good Christianity*. Doubtless so it is; but not the whole of good Christianity by



by one half. The peculiar Principles and Doctrines of the Gospel soar vastly above any thing the wisest Heathens could possibly know; though some of them taught and seem to have practised very good Morality. But christian Morality stands upon much nobler and far more sublime principles and motives, and he who would teach it ought to understand the whole counsel of God, relating to our redemption and salvation by Jesus Christ, as delivered to us in revelation.

The following passages, with many others in the Apostolic Writings, contain sentiments vastly superior to the utmost efforts of human Reason. (a) *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* — (b) *He hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.* — (c) *Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, the Prince of the Kings of the earth, hath* *loved*

(a) John iii. 16. (b) Ephes. i. 6, 7, 8. (c) Rev. i. 5, 6.

loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father. — (d) Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit which are God's. — (e) I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice — unto God. (f) He is a merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people; and is able to save, to the uttermost, those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. — (g) God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. — (h) I give unto mine eternal life, and I will raise them up again at the last day. — (i) Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, that when Christ who is your life shall appear, ye also may appear with him in glory. — (k) God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. — (l) Ye are

(d) 1 Cor. vi. 20. (e) Rom. xii. 1. (f) Heb. ii. 17.  
vii. 25. (g) 1 John v. 11. (h) John x. 28. (i) Col. iii. 3.  
(k) Eph. i. 4. (l) 1 Pet. ii. 9.



are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. — He hath called us to his kingdom and glory. — (m) Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. — (n) And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. — (o) He hath quickened us together and made us fit together with Christ, in heavenly places. — (p) Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying *Abba, Father*. — (q) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of a divine nature. — (r) Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the holy Spirit. He that clearly understands, and is duly affected with the Doctrines couched in these texts and others of the same sort, is an able Minister of the  
F new

(m) 1 John iii. 1.

(n) Rom. viii. 17.

(o) Eph. ii. 5, 6.

(p) Gal. iv. 6.

(q) 2 Pet. i. 4.

(r) Rom. xv. 13.

*new Covenant, and a faithful steward of the mysteries of God.* Happy is such a one in his imployment, as a Minister of the Gospel, whereby he is obliged to the daily study of such noble subjects; happy in the solid comfort and satisfaction of mind, which naturally result from principles so divine and heavenly, and from a constant serious endeavor to communicate the knowledge and power of them to others; and though his circumstances in this world should be but of the lower kind, at the coming of our Lord, he will be happy, rich and honorable, beyond expression for evermore. But how will they appear in that day, who professing to be Ministers of Christ, yet have not been conscientiously studious to gain the clearest and most extensive knowledge from the divine Oracles of the Doctrines which he has there delivered to us?

What remains, my dear Countrymen, is humbly to request your favorable acceptance of my honest endeavors to serve you in this affair, which I reckon is of very great importance. I was born, and received the first rudiments of learning among you. This is my



my native Country; but the Providence of God so soon carried me into remoter parts, and so long detained me there, that I am now returned in the capacity of a stranger, which by the laws of humanity pleads for kind and tender regard. And I am come not with any selfish or sinister views, but with a sincere and disinterested desire to do you service in the Gospel of Christ, by communicating to young Students that knowledge in the holy Scriptures, which I may have acquired by a long course of thought, and the most impartial inquiry. It has been a great advantage to my usefulness, which I reflect upon with thankfulness and pleasure, that in every other situation, I have lived in peace, honor and esteem, with persons of the best sense and fortunes; especially in my last situation, which I could not but leave with reluctance, and from which nothing could have drawn me, but a sense of duty to God. And now I have consecrated my ripest, though declining years, to the service of true Religion among you, which (upon the most just and catholic principles) as God shall enable me, I will labor to promote

promote to the end of my days. I hope you will permit me to lay some claim to your patronage and encouragement.

I most heartily wish, that the Gospel may always shine among you in all its heavenly splendor; that it may reign in your hearts, and in the hearts of all your Ministers; and that in the light thereof you may walk in all holiness and purity, in love and goodness, in comfort and joy in the holy Spirit to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





